with the social partners to bring about a consensus especially on the implementation of the recommendations of the Second National Commission on Labour.

Legislation for unorganised workers

1735. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are seriously considering to formulate a legislation to regulate conditions of service for the workers in the unorganised sector;

(b) if so, the salient features of the proposed legislation;

(c) whether the workers in the unorganised sector are deprived of their rights and also neglected completely; and

(d) if so, to what extent the proposed legislation is going to protect their rights?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) to (d) The Government propose to formulate a legislation for the unorganised workers to ensure their minimum protection and welfare. Though Government has taken up several initiatives through legislation, creation of funds, welfare and poverty alleviation schemes, awareness generation programmes etc. the proposed legislation is expected to provide welfare measures and protect the rights of the unorganised workers to a great extent.

Child labourers

1736. DR. ABRAR AHMED:
SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the number of child labourers in the country;

(b) the various child labour abolition programmes undertaken by Government at present;

(c) whether Government propose to bring amendment in the Child Labour Prohibition of Regulation Act, 1986 to make it more purposeful; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Authentic information on child labour in the country is generated by the decennial census. According to the 1991 census, the number of working children in India was 11.28 million. The figures of the 2001 census have not yet been published.

(b) Government of India has taken steps for withdrawal and rehabilitation of child labour working in hazardous occupations to reduce the incidence of child labour in a particular district through the Scheme of National Child Labour Projects (NCLPs). Under the Scheme of NCLP, special schools have been set up in the child labour endemic districts with the provision for non-formal/formal education, vocational training, stipend, nutrition, health-care etc. So far, 100 NCLPs have been sanctioned in 13 child labour endemic districts for coverage of 2.11 lakh children. As per the information available, 1.45 lakh children (approx.) have already been mainstreamed into the formal school system.

(c) and (d) The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 prohibits employment of children in occupations and processes listed in the schedule to the Act and regulates it in all other employments.

The issue regarding amendment of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 has been discussed in several fora including the Conference of the State Labour Ministers. Important suggestions made in the conference to make the Act more stringent include (a) making the offence a cognizable one; (b) making the penalties more stringent and deterrent; and (c) the responsibility as to the proof of age of a child being made that of the employer. Amendment of the Act is an ongoing process. As of now, no definite time frame can be indicated for amendment of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986.

Agricultural labourers

1737. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA:
DR. ABRAR AHMED:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the number of agricultural labourers in the country as per the latest census;